



August 2, 2006

Ms. Judith F. Judson, Chairwoman
Board of Commissioners
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Telecommunications and Energy
One South Station
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Chairwoman Judson and Board of Commissioners:

I am extremely disturbed to learn that Verizon has submitted an application for a statewide franchise with your agency. This application should be denied for a number of reasons. Among the most important, approving this application would strip local communities of the right to negotiate with cable providers, it could potentially lead to class discrimination and would unfairly give Verizon an advantage over current providers.

The local franchising process is something that all cities and towns rely upon because they are able to leverage additional funds for schools, libraries and other public facilities as well as financial support for various programs and events. To allow Verizon to bypass this process, which every other cable provider must go through, would be an injustice and would most likely leave communities worse off than they are now where Verizon would be exempt from mitigation and local oversight.

Further, an essential component of the local franchising process is a town's ability to fight for its residents. In addition to leveraging funds and ensuring that a town obtains the best quality cable, most, if not all, towns also require that a cable provider offer cable service to **everyone** in the community, not just those neighborhoods where they may see a larger profit than others. Without the local franchising process and the oversight that accompanies it, Verizon, as a large business primarily focused on the bottom line and profitability, could easily choose to only offer their services to certain demographical areas with the best cost-benefit analysis.

Additionally, approval of Verizon's application would lead to Verizon having an unfair advantage over every other cable provider in Massachusetts. It makes absolutely no sense to allow Verizon to bypass the local franchising process where every other provider that currently does business in any given community has had to negotiate directly with the city or town. Verizon talks about healthy competition and the consumer, but in actuality, the type of competition they have in mind is quite unhealthy and would end up hurting the consumer.

Please do not approve Verizon's application for a statewide franchise. I ask that you seriously consider the true ramifications that such a move would have on local communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Heather Avellar". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Heather Avellar
Taunton, MA